

BE IT KNOWN, that **Arthur F. Woodrow** has invented a new and useful improvement in:

**FILING CABINET DEVICE AND METHOD OF USE**

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Date

## FILING CABINET DEVICE AND METHOD OF USE

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[01] The present invention is in the field of filing cabinets and devices used for  
5 assisting in filing.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[02] As shown in FIG. 1, many filing cabinets 10 of the prior art use a movable divider  
20 movable in the direction of the arrows shown to maintain files 30 in an upright  
10 condition in the filing cabinet 10. Initially, when only a few files 30 are placed in the  
filing cabinet 10, the movable divider 20 may be positioned near a front 40 of the filing  
cabinet 10 to prevent the files 30 from falling flat in the filing cabinet 10.

[03] A problem with the movable dividers 20 is that getting the spacing correct for the  
number of files 30 in the filing cabinet 10 is difficult. Either the divider 20 is moved to a  
15 position where too much room is provided for the files 30 or the divider 20 is moved to a  
position where not enough room is provided for the files 30. If the divider 20 is moved  
to a position where too much room is provided for the files 30, the bottoms of the files  
30 tend to slide forward and fall onto their rear side, or slide rearward and fall onto their  
front side.

20 [04] Regardless of whether the folders fall on their rear side or their front side,  
working with files 30 in such a condition is frustrating and inefficient for a number of  
reasons. With the files 30 in this condition, it is difficult to remove the files 30 from the  
filing cabinet 10 and view the file identification tabs on the tops of the files 30 to identify  
the files 30. If the divider 20 is moved to a position where not enough room is provided

for the files 30, the files 30 become tightly packed together, making it difficult to remove files 30 from the filing cabinet 10.

[05] Accordingly, a need exists for a filing cabinet device and method that makes working with files 30 in filing cabinets 10 with a movable divider 20 easier and more efficient.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[06] Accordingly, an aspect of the invention involves a filing cabinet device that may be placed in front of the movable divider 20, the front 40 of the filing cabinet 10, or a rear 50 of the filing cabinet 10 that maintains files 30 upright, prevents files 30 from falling on their side, and acts as a spacer for ensuring that proper space exists between the front 40 of the filing cabinet 10 and the movable divider 20 or the front 40 of the filing cabinet 10 and the rear 50 of the filing cabinet 10 (if no movable divider 20 exists or the movable divider 20 is removed) for the files 30 lying therebetween to be easily removed and inserted.

[07] Another aspect of the invention involves a method of using a filing cabinet device with a filing cabinet having a front, a rear, and a movable divider therein. The method includes the steps of moving the movable divider to a desired position in the filing cabinet for placing files in front of the movable divider, between the movable divider and the front of the filing cabinet; providing a filing cabinet device for the movable divider including a projection that extends a distance W in front of a top of the movable divider; placing one or more files in the filing cabinet between the movable divider and the front of the filing cabinet, the one or more files including a rear file having a top and a bottom;

and using the projection of the filing cabinet device to orient the one or more files between the movable divider and the front of the filing cabinet so that the bottom of the rear file extends closer to the front of the filing cabinet than the top of the rear file, allowing the files to be easily identified and prevent the files from being packed too tightly together in the filing cabinet.

[08] A further aspect of the invention involves a method of using a filing cabinet device with a filing cabinet having a front and a rear. The method includes the steps of providing a filing cabinet device for the rear including a projection that extends a distance W in front of a top of the rear; placing one or more files in the filing cabinet between the rear and the front of the filing cabinet, the one or more files including a rear file having a top and a bottom; and using the projection of the filing cabinet device to orient the one or more files between the rear and the front of the filing cabinet so that the bottom of the rear file extends closer to the front of the filing cabinet than the top of the rear file, allowing the files to be easily identified and prevent the files from being packed too tightly together in the filing cabinet.

[09] Further objects and advantages will be apparent to those skilled in the art after a review of the drawings and the detailed description of the preferred embodiments set forth below.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[10] FIG. 1 is a simplified side view of a filing cabinet of the prior art including a movable divider that may be moved in the direction of the arrows as shown.

[11] FIG. 2 is a simplified side view of the filing cabinet of FIG. 1, and shows an embodiment of a filing cabinet device that may be used with the filing cabinet.

[12] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the filing cabinet device illustrated in FIG. 2.

## 5 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[13] With reference to FIGS. 2 and 3, an embodiment of a filing cabinet device 60 and an exemplary method of using the same will now be described. The filing cabinet device 60 (hereinafter "device 60") is preferably used with a filing cabinet 10 including a movable divider 20 that is movable forward towards a front 40 and rearward towards a rear 50 in the direction of the arrows shown. Files 30 are stored in the filing cabinet 10 in an upright condition so that identification tabs at the top of the files 30 are readily viewable by a user upon viewing the opened filing cabinet 10.

[14] It should be noted, in alternative embodiments, the filing cabinet 10 may not have the movable divider 20 or the divider 20 may be removed from the filing cabinet 10. As used herein, "filing cabinet" includes a single filing cabinet drawer of a multi-drawer filing cabinet, a single filing container of a multi-container filing system, or a single filing container for keeping files in order. As used herein, "files" include files, folders, papers, documents, filing cards, or any other objects normally stored in a filing cabinet.

[15] In the embodiment of the device 60 shown, the device 60 includes an angled front 70, a flat base 80, and a flat, vertical back 90. The device 60 includes a projection 100 such as a leading or forward edge 110 that acts to space the bottom of the files 30 a distance W equal to the width W relative to the divider 20 or a distance substantially equal to the horizontal distance from the projection 100 to the top of the movable divider

20. The device 60 conforms to the dimensions of the filing cabinet 10 and may come in different sizes for different-sized filing cabinets and/or different-sized files 30 (e.g., letter, legal, other). The device 60 includes a height H, a width W, and a length L. The height H is preferably one-third to one-half the height HD of the divider 20. The length L is  
5 preferably substantially the same length as the divider 20. The width W may vary, but is preferably 0.5 to 6 inches. Angle A is preferably in the range of 30-45 degrees relative to the back 90 or divider 20. The device 60 is preferably made of a material such as plastic, metal, wood, or any material or combination of materials that are relatively light-weight and rigid enough to maintain its shape while resisting the pressure of the files 30  
10 urged against it.

[16] The distance W that the projection 100 extends from the divider 20 determines the location of the bottom of the file 30 relative to the divider 20. As shown in FIG. 2, a file 120 adjacent the divider 20 includes a top that leans against the divider 20. As a result, it is the distance W that the projection 100 extends in front of the divider 20 that  
15 determines the orientation of the file 120 (the angle or slope of the angled front 70 also determines the angle of orientation of the file 120). The orientation of the file 120 determines the orientation of the rest of the files 30 because the rest of the files 30 lean against file 120. Providing this distance W between the bottom of the rear file 120 and the divider 20 not only ensures the proper orientation of the files 30, making the  
20 identification tabs at the top of the files 30 easy to read, but also ensures proper spacing for the files 30 between the divider 20 and the front 40 so that the files 30 do not become packed too tightly between the divider 20 and the front 40, making the files 30 difficult to remove.

[17] Although the device 60 is shown as a right triangular block or wedge, in alternative embodiments, the device 60 may have alternative configurations that include a projection 100 that extends a distance W from the divider 20. For example, the block may have alternative triangular block configurations (e.g., isoceles triangular block, 5 equilateral triangular block, scalene triangular block, other triangular or wedge block), polygonal block configurations (e.g., tetragonal, trapezoidal, parallelepiped, gnomon, rhomboidal, deltoidal, rectangular, square), rectilinear configurations, curvilinear configurations, or a combination of one or more of the above. The device 60 may be connected to or integrated with the divider 20, preferably in a lower part of the divider 10 20, similar to the location shown in FIG. 2. In an embodiment where the device 60 is integrated with the divider 20, the bottom third to bottom half of the divider 20 may be angled forward similar to the that of the angled front 40 to form a projection 100 that protrudes in front of the divider 20. Alternatively, the divider 20 may comprise the device 60 (e.g., the divider 20 is angled rearward towards the rear 50 in a orientation 15 similar to that of rear file 120 so the divider 20 functions in a manner similar to rear file 120, namely, to orient the rest of the files 20 at a desired angle so that the identification tab can be easily viewed and prevent the files 30 from being packed together too tightly.)

[18] With reference to FIG. 2, the device 60 will now be described in use. In the 20 embodiment of the device 60 where the device 60 is separate from the divider 20 (e.g., a wedge), the divider 20 is moved forward or rearward in the filing cabinet 10 in the direction of the arrows shown to an approximate position for the number files 30 planning on being stored in the filing cabinet 10. In moving the divider 20, the user

should be liberal in determining the position for the divider 20. Once the divider 20 is set in position, the device 60 is positioned adjacent to and in front of the divider 20 so that the projection 100 extends in front of the divider, towards the front 40 of the filing cabinet 10. One or more files 30 may then be inserted into the filing cabinet 10 between the front 40 and the device 60. The rear file 120 is disposed so that the bottom of the file 120 contacts the projection 100 and the top of the file 120 leans against the divider 20. The rest of the files 30 may automatically take the position of the rear file 120 or may require the user to urge the files 30 rearward so that they lean against the rear file 120. In this position, as shown in FIG. 2, the files 30 are angled rearwardly in an orientation that allows the identification tabs at the top of the files 30 to be easily viewed. The distance W that the projection 100 extends relative to the divider 20 prevents the files 30 from being packed too tightly together, which makes it difficult to remove or insert files 30. In embodiments where the device 60 is connected to, integrated with, or a part of the movable divider 20, the device 60 will be moved to the proper position with movement of the divider 20.

[19] Although the device 60 has been described as being placed or disposed in front of the divider 20 or as part of the divider 20, in filing cabinets 10 where no divider 20 exists or the divider 20 is removed, the device 60 may be placed or disposed in front of the rear 50 or may be part of the rear 50 of the filing cabinet 10. Although less preferable, the device 60 may be placed or disposed next to the front 40 or may be a part of the front 40 of the filing cabinet for orienting the files 30 and providing proper spacing for the files 30.



[20] It will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art that still further changes and modifications in the actual concepts described herein can readily be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the following claims.